

News Release

Franklin County Board of Commissioners | Office of Public Affairs | (614) 525-3322

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday, July 24 2013

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FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING RECOGNIZED FOR INNOVATIVE AND IMPACTFUL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Staff and partners of the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department are pleased to have won two awards recently from the Ohio Conference of Community Development for innovative and impactful initiatives in the community. The Ohio Conference of Community Development will be presenting its Presidents Award for Innovative Programs to the department for its support of Dress For Success Columbus and its Community Development Professional of the Year award to county employee Mark Paxson at an awards banquet this evening.

"We're very pleased to be able to support a program like Dress For Success," said County Board of Commissioners President John O'Grady. "We're also very proud of Mark and the work that he does. His dedication, and that of the good people at Dress For Success represent the best of our community and help to make Central Ohio a better place to live every day."

Bringing together more than 8,000 donors and more than 300 volunteers, Dress For Success Columbus helps local women to find, prepare for, and land good jobs. Services include career advice, computer access, resume writing assistance and, of course, stylish professional clothing for interviews and work. Franklin County's Department of Economic Development and Planning supports Dress For Success with a \$10,000 Community Development Block Grant and, since its inception in 2007, Dress For Success Columbus has assisted more than 4,000 women in Central Ohio.

"Jobs are critical to our sustained growth. As the fastest growing county in Ohio, Franklin faces both challenges and opportunities," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "The staff and board of Dress for Success Columbus, have been a great partner in reaching our goal of a good job for anyone desiring to work. Our Economic Development staff has worked hard to mutually assist our goals. We congratulate them on their award."

County Grants Administrator Mark Paxson has worked in community development for more than 20 years. Among other initiatives, he administers 5 federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant programs for the county totaling tens of millions of dollars and including the HUD HOME Program, which assists local low-income homeowners, home buyers, and tenants with things like rent, home rehabilitation, and other site improvements. Under Mark's management, Franklin County's HOME initiative has risen to number 6 in Ohio since 2006, and is now number one in both the state and the nation in the percentage of funds committed and the leveraging ratio for dollars committed to rental activities.

"Some Central Ohio families are still struggling from the effects of the Great Recession," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "Dress For Success and the HUD HOME Program make a real and tremendous difference in the lives of working families. It's an honor to be able to support them, and gratifying to be recognized for that work."

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